DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 311 367 CG 021 982

AUTHOR Mosatche, Harriet S.; And Others
TITLE Girls Are Great. Contemporary Issues: Growing Up Female.
INSTITUTION Girl Scouts of the U.S.A., New York, N.Y.
PUB DATE 87
NOTE 22p.
AVAILABLE FROM Girls Scouts of the U.S.A., National Equipment Services, 830 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10022 ($1.25 each; quantity discount--inquire).
PUB TYPE Guides - General (050)

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS *Adolescents; *Children; *Females; Helping Relationship; Individual Development; Mentors; *Self Concept; *Well Being
IDENTIFIERS *Girl Scouts of the USA

ABSTRACT

This document is designed to help Girl Scout leaders understand the maturation of girls and how to assist the girls in their development. The information and activities described in this booklet are designed to help girls see themselves in a positive way, understand some of the forces that influence them as they develop, and cope with the stresses they will inevitably encounter. Issues related to physical well-being are discussed, including puberty, physical fitness, nutrition and diet, eating disorders, and obesity. Issues related to psychological factors are described, focusing on self-esteem, body image, and coping with stress. Social, cultural, and institutional factors are discussed, including social roles, sex roles and stereotypes, schools, media, and language. Specific tips for Girl Scout leaders to help girls to grow into healthy, mature women and feel good about themselves are provided. Suggested troop/group activities designed to help build self-esteem, provide positive ways for coping with the stresses of growing up female, provide avenues for overcoming sex-role stereotypes, and help girls to enjoy being female are described. These activities are grouped by Scouting levels. Links to Girl Scouting programs are given and a resource list of organizations is provided. Supportive materials for girls and adults are listed. (ABL)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED311367

CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

Growing Up Female

Girls Are Great

CG 021982

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Verna L. Simpkins

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

GIRL SCOUTS

Contemporary Issues

Growing Up Female

Girls Are Great

Girl Scouts of the U.S.A.
830 Third Avenue
New York, N.Y. 10022

GIRL SCOUTS OF THE U.S.A.

Betty F. Pilsbury, *President*
Frances Hesselbein, *National Executive Director*

Inquiries related to *Contemporary Issues: Girls Are Great* should be directed to Program, Girl Scouts of the U.S.A., 830 Third Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10022.

Authors: Harriet S. Mosatche, Ph.D.
Verna L. Simpkins
Sharon Woods Hussey

This publication may not be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in whole or in part or by any means, electronic or mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior written permission of Girl Scouts of the United States of America, 830 Third Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10022.

© 1987 by Girl Scouts of the United States of America
All rights reserved
First Impression 1987
Printed in the United States of America
5 4 3 2

Contents

Introduction 5

- Issues Related to Physical Well-Being 5
- Issues Related to Psychological Factors 7
- Issues Related to Social Factors 8
- Issues Related to Cultural or Institutional Factors 9

Specific Tips for Girl Scout Leaders 11

Suggested Troop/Group Growing Up Female Activities 12

- Daisy Girl Scout Activities 13
- Brownie Girl Scout Activities 14
- Junior Girl Scout Activities 15
- Cadette Girl Scout Activities 16
- Senior Girl Scout Activities 17

Program Links 18

Resources 19

Introduction

Growing up female in today's rapidly changing world means facing an ever-widening array of opportunities and challenges. Growing up has never been easy, but today with all the pressures, decisions, and conflicting expectations that confront girls, it is an especially challenging process. Girls need to develop the confidence to explore the best opportunities and the determination to become anything they want to be.

In many different ways, Girl Scouting can help girls to see themselves as individuals of worth and to reach their full potential. The information and activities in this booklet are designed to help girls see themselves in a positive way, understand some of the forces that influence them as they develop, and cope with the stresses they will inevitably encounter.

Companion booklets dealing with other aspects of growing up female, providing deeper examination of specific issues, will be published in the future.

As a Girl Scout leader, you will often find that girls look to you for added guidance in dealing with issues related to growing up female today. The following sections provide discussions of four broad areas of influence: physical, psychological, social, and cultural. It is often hard to separate these factors for they interact in numerous and complex ways. For instance, a girl's physical health affects her self-image, the way she sees herself. And, in the same way, the stress of multiple social roles (for example, being a daughter, sister, friend, student, and employee) may have an impact on a girl's psychological well-being.

Issues Related to Physical Well-Being

Puberty

Puberty, the period of sexual maturation, is a time of physical growth and emotional changes. Although a time of intense change and growth, it need not be a time of crises and turmoil. Adolescents are acutely aware of how their bodies are maturing and it is important for girls to understand their own growth and development, and that of boys as well.

In girls, puberty may begin as early as seven years of age or as late as 16 years. A growth spurt is usual at the onset of puberty and varies widely in intensity and duration. The disproportionate growth rates of various skeletal structures may account for some of the awkwardness and self-consciousness associated with the adolescent years. It is important to help girls understand that there is a very wide range in rates of development and that each person grows at her own rate.

With the onset of puberty comes the development of the reproductive system. It begins with the gradual enlargement of ovaries and other related organs, and this maturation is generally first noticed when girls begin to develop breasts or begin to menstruate. Girls react to the physical changes of puberty in a variety of ways, from highly positive to extremely negative. During the teen years, a girl's self-esteem is related to her body image, formed partly by the attitudes of parents and friends.

Girls usually begin menstruating between the ages of nine and 16. At first, most girls have irregular periods which can last from two days to a week. Many feel uncomfortable during their periods and may experience cramps in the abdomen or lower back. If a girl suffers from severe cramps, she should see a physician.

Some girls may experience one or more of the symptoms related to premenstrual syndrome (PMS). This condition involves the recurrence of a variety of physical and psychological symptoms before the menstrual period. Although it can occur in females of any age, it most commonly becomes really noticeable during the late twenties and early thirties. The physical symptoms can be diverse and may include water retention, weight gain, abdominal bloating, breast swelling and tenderness, backaches, cravings for sweet or salty foods, and fatigue. Psychological symptoms include irritability, depression, anxiety, and mood swings. Dietary changes and exercise have been shown to be effective forms of treatment for some affected individuals.

Girls may want to discuss the use of menstrual pads or tampons and how to feel comfortable during their period. Girls need to know that they can exercise, swim, bathe, and behave as they normally do and that menstruation is not a period of lessened physical capacity or weakness.

Girls will also need to be made aware of toxic shock syndrome (TSS). The use of tampons is an individual choice; some girls will find that learning about TSS helps them to make an informed decision.

Toxic shock syndrome is a rare but serious disease that mainly affects women under the age of 30 who use tampons during menstruation. The warning signs of TSS include: a sudden high fever (usually 102° F or 38.9° C or higher), vomiting, diarrhea, dizziness, fainting or near fainting when standing up, or a rash that looks like a sunburn. In rare cases, TSS can lead to death. If a girl is experiencing these symptoms during her menstrual period, the tampon should be removed and medical help obtained immediately. If girls have additional questions about this syndrome, encourage them to consult a physician.

You can help girls by being open to the feelings they may express about menstruation. Reassure girls that menstruation is a healthy function of the female body and nothing to be worried about or ashamed of. It is a signal that they are growing up and capable of reproduction.

If a girl does start menstruating for the first time at a meeting or on a trip, remember that you may need to explain carefully what is happening. A girl may become very upset by this unexpected event, particularly if she has not been informed in advance. It will be important to help her know that this is just a healthy sign that she is becoming a young woman.

Physical Fitness

Being physically fit can enhance a girl's self-image as she is growing up. Girl Scout leaders can play an important role in helping girls get into shape or keep themselves in shape.

Studies show that girls who exercise regularly feel better, have more energy, often lose and keep off excess weight, and improve their muscular strength and flexibility. Exercise can be a way to cope with stress and fight depression. Girls who are physically fit usually adopt a more healthy lifestyle—eat more nutritionally and don't smoke. Overall, these girls feel more positively about themselves and can take charge of their own physical and emotional well-being.

It has also been found that regular exercise throughout life can help to prevent osteoporosis, a bone disorder that is prevalent in older women. By starting an exercise program at a young age, girls can begin to increase their bone density and decrease the bone loss that often occurs in later years.

Nutrition and Diet

A diet that provides an adequate supply and balance of essential nutrients is crucial for healthy growth and development. Children and adolescents may be aware of what constitutes a nutritious diet, yet often neglect good eating habits. Fast foods and snack foods high in fat, salt, or sugar are frequently mainstays of the diet. Chronic dieting is another factor seriously undermining good nutrition. With the strong correlation our society perceives between thinness and beauty, a very high percentage of girls and young women are constantly dieting, often needlessly.

For most children and adolescents, a regimen of nutritious, sensible eating, balanced with daily physical exercise, is the most effective way to

maintain proper weight. It is also important for girls to recognize that physical growth and development are determined to a great extent by genetic makeup. Body shapes and sizes vary greatly, and extreme measures taken to achieve an unrealistic ideal may pose serious health problems.

Eating Disorders

Anorexia nervosa and bulimia are eating disorders characterized by a preoccupation with food, an irrational fear of being fat, and a distorted body image. These disorders have been related to biological, psychological, and social factors. Anorexia involves a dramatic weight loss due to self-starvation or severe self-imposed dieting. Bulimia involves binging and purging accompanied by frequent weight fluctuations, rather than profound continuous weight loss. It is estimated that anorexia strikes more than one in every 100 teenage girls and young women; the rate is much higher for bulimia, perhaps as frequently as one out of five.

Below are some characteristics of abnormal eaters:

Bulimia	Anorexia
■ a cycle of eating binges followed by rigid dieting and or forced vomiting	■ extreme emaciation (loss of 25% of body weight)
■ extreme fear of gaining weight or becoming fat	■ extreme fear of gaining weight or becoming fat
■ menstrual irregularities	■ cessation or delay in onset of menstrual cycle
■ laxative or diuretic abuse	■ preoccupation with food and diet
■ dental problems	■ distorted body image
■ frequent weight fluctuations	■ inability to respond to signals of hunger and fatigue
	■ excessive exercise

If you suspect that a girl is bulimic or anorexic, try to talk with her about the problem. Since these disorders can be serious and at times even life-threatening, it will be important to ensure that measures are taken to help her. Parents or guardians should be alerted. Contact your Girl Scout council office for sources of professional help. Early detection and prompt professional treatment can increase the chances for recovery and cure.

Obesity

The other side of the picture is obesity (usually defined as at least 20 percent over normal weight). This is not only an important health concern to girls; it is also a condition that can have adverse effects on a girl's self-esteem.

The roots of obesity are still not well understood, but probably derive from some complex combination of biological, social, and psychological factors. Obesity has been associated with numerous disorders, including diabetes, high blood pressure, arteriosclerosis, and heart attacks. Of more immediate concern to girls are the psychological and social problems that accompany obesity—the poor self-esteem, the embarrassment in social situations, and the difficulty of finding attractive clothes. A girl who is obese needs your support. Express your concern about her health and well-being rather than about how much she weighs. Help the girls in the group to be understanding of those with weight problems.

Issues Related to Psychological Factors

Self-Esteem

Positive self-esteem—the way a girl evaluates herself—is critical in her development. Self-esteem reflects how a girl feels about her personal attributes, abilities, and behavior.

While parents are the prime influences on self-esteem early in life, other people—teachers, Girl Scout leaders, friends, classmates, and many others—play a critical role in affecting a girl's sense of worth. Self-esteem is also influenced by the successes and failures girls experience as they grow up. In turn, the attitudes girls have about themselves influence every aspect of their lives—their success in school, with peers, and with family members.

Self-esteem, then, is part of a cycle. As girls have opportunities to be successful and are treated as individuals of worth by others, their self-esteem increases. Their enhanced self-esteem allows them to try new activities to develop their skills and reach out to new people who enrich their lives. Further increases in self-esteem naturally follow. Unfortunately, the cycle can also operate the other way for girls. If they are deprived of opportunities for success and are treated with little respect, self-esteem begins to drop. The result might be a girl who is afraid to try because she expects to fail. Positive Girl Scout experiences can make a difference!

Body Image

One of the areas in which a girl's self-image is often negative is related to physical appearance. The greater dissatisfaction many females report with their own bodies as compared to the dissatisfaction reported by males may account for the higher rates among women of disorders such as bulimia and anorexia nervosa.

Many girls believe that to be appreciated and admired they must be beautiful. The perception of what is beautiful is greatly influenced by the media, and consequently many girls feel great pressure to achieve a specific look that, for them, is unobtainable.

Girls can be encouraged to look their best, but they also need to learn to feel comfortable with and accepting of those aspects of their appearance that cannot be changed. They need to be helped to appreciate and see value in aspects of themselves other than physical appearance. Intelligence, emotional strength, athletic skill, friendliness, creativity, kindness, and persistence can all be important elements in a girl's self-image.

Coping with Stress

It is unrealistic to assume that childhood is a carefree period of life. Pressures stem from anticipated or actual experiences in a girl's own personal life, in her family, at school, and with friends.

Stress is a very personal experience. What may be very painful for one girl may be insignificant for another. And stress is not always related to unpleasant events. For instance, an opportunity to meet a favorite athlete is a positive event that may very well create some amount of stress for most people. What should I say? What will I wear? How should I act?

Some girls cope well with stress; others do not. Substance abuse, suicide, and reckless and violent behavior are some examples of destructive coping techniques. More positive ways of coping include physical exercise, talking to friends, working on a hobby, or writing in a diary. In some situations, a girl may be able to directly reduce the stress. For instance, if she is feeling overwhelmed by all of the demands on her time, she might decide to eliminate a couple of after-school activities.

Expressing feelings in an appropriate manner can also help reduce stress. Feelings affect the way girls act and the way they think about themselves and others. Feelings may change from one minute to the next. One important development in the adolescent years is that girls begin to experience stronger sexual feelings, which they will need to know are a normal part of growing up. They will also need to know how to handle these feelings, which can be stressful. Providing the girls in your troop or group with positive outlets for stress and opportunities to learn and practice beneficial coping skills can help them throughout their lives.

Issues Related to Social Factors

Social Roles

Relationships are an important part of life. A girl might be a sister, daughter, cousin, friend, granddaughter, aunt, niece, tutor, and babysitter. When she grows up, she might add wife, mother, roommate, daughter-in-law, sister-in-law, mother-in-law, employer, colleague, and others to her repertoire of roles. Females generally focus a great deal of energy on relationships—in most cases, more energy than that expended by males.

Part of growing up is learning how to function in the many social roles in which girls find themselves, how to separate these roles when necessary, and, hopefully, how to balance these roles. Women often feel overwhelmed trying to cope with the many social demands placed on them,

particularly when they are not prepared for them. Girls, from a young age, need to develop skills for relating to others in mutually satisfying ways and they need to find ways to balance their social roles to avoid excessive conflict and stress.

Access to role models who are leading happy, fulfilling, balanced lives can make a difference to girls. Girls also benefit from opportunities to learn how to set priorities, make decisions, and solve problems.

Sex Roles and Stereotypes

Growing up in a world where traditional sex roles and stereotyped ideas about females are still evident causes many girls to limit their hopes and dreams for the future. Research indicates that children learn at a very early age what attitudes and behaviors are expected of them in terms of their sex—what toys to play with, clothes to wear, sports and hobbies to enjoy, or careers to choose.

Sex roles are influenced by values, beliefs, the media, and by models provided by parents or other significant adults in a girl's life. Sex roles and stereotypes influence the way girls feel about themselves, how they behave, what they believe they can do, and what goals they set for themselves.

To some extent, the more blatant forms of sex-role stereotyping have been disappearing from all walks of life, from the family to the schools. However, subtle forms of prejudice and discrimination—for example, the picture on the toy box showing the girl watching while the boy builds the tower or the television program portraying the father as the parent who always drives the family—all portray limited options and stifle dreams.

Girl Scouting can help girls overcome some of the stereotyped ideas they may have acquired and realize that there is no limit to what they can do and become as females.

Issues Related to Cultural or Institutional Factors

Schools

Children spend so much of their time in school that they are certainly going to be influenced by their experiences. Unfortunately, teachers frequently treat girls and boys differently—sometimes intentionally, but most often without meaning to do so. Research studies have shown that both male and female teachers at every level from elementary school to high school talk more to boys, ask them more questions, praise and criticize them more often, and give them more advice and direction.

When boys and girls begin school, their achievement scores are very similar. However, by the time girls graduate from high school their scores on all kinds of achievement tests (not just in math and science, as is commonly thought) are lower than the scores obtained by boys. Certainly, it is not just teachers who are to blame for the fact that girls' scores are poorer than boys'. But schooling does play a critical role in academic attitudes and achievement.

What is lacking for girls in formal educational experiences may be found in informal educational experiences. Girl Scouting, by providing girls with a supportive, single-sex environment, allows them to set and reach goals, develop skills, and learn about relating to others—all in a nonthreatening atmosphere that encourages success.

Media

The media—magazines, books, newspapers, movies, radio, records, and particularly television—play a powerful role in shaping the way girls grow up today. Children spend more time watching television than doing any other single waking activity. What girls see and hear influences them in both direct and subtle ways. What they see is significantly more male than female characters overall, and the females they do see are frequently portrayed as secondary characters or as relatively helpless personalities (although there are beginning to be some noticeable exceptions).

Activities, jobs, interests, and household roles on television often reflect sexual stereotypes. And voice-overs (the authoritative narrative by an off-camera individual) are often male voices even when the product is one typically used by females.

Many children's books at all age levels also foster sex-role stereotyping. Girls and women are underrepresented in children's literature and again, the females who do appear are often seen pursuing quiet activities or traditional occupations. There are, however, many very good books available that do support the idea that growing up female can be filled with opportunities, excitement, and success in all facets of life. Girl Scout leaders can help girls find such books at the local library.

Language

Language is usually seen as a reflection of a way a person thinks. But the relationship also works the other way. That is, words have a significant effect on the way children think about their world.

Even today, the language that appears in textbooks, in everyday speech, and elsewhere is frequently sexist. It is often claimed that children understand that when the word "he" is used, it is used generically to mean he and she, or when "salesman" is used, the individual referred to might be male or female. However, research studies have found that when a word like "man" is used in a sentence, children react to the word literally. They generally think in terms of males only and exclude females from consideration.

Using nonsexist language and finding nonsexist resources can help girls fulfill their potential. They will realize that they can become a fire fighter (not a fireman), a sales representative (not salesman), and a thousand other things. The world will seem a little more open to them as they grow up.

Specific Tips for Girl Scout Leaders

As an understanding and caring Girl Scout leader, you can play an important role in helping girls acquire the knowledge and skills they will need to grow into healthy, mature women who feel good about themselves. Here are some tips:

- Provide an atmosphere of openness, freedom, and trust so that girls will feel comfortable when expressing themselves and when seeking advice from you.
- Give girls the opportunity to explore who they are and what they believe in a caring environment.
- Be in touch with your own attitudes about yourself as a female before educating girls. If you do not feel comfortable discussing certain topics or guiding girls through some activities, acknowledge these feelings. Seek help from others in facilitating the group.
- Be a positive role model for the attributes you would like to encourage in girls.
- Listen seriously to what girls have to say. Girls who are listened to, taken seriously, and genuinely cared for are more likely to have high self-esteem.
- Help girls feel positive about themselves—their strengths, skills, and abilities. For example, if girls are given activities to build their self-esteem, they will be more likely to resist pressure from peers, adopt healthier lifestyles, and actively explore a variety of career options.
- Give factual information to girls in terms they can understand. Girls need information to counteract the myths they may hear, and to help them make informed, responsible decisions about their well-being.
- Be sensitive to ethnic, cultural, and religious differences, family traditions, and social customs of girls. Offer factual information rather than your own values. Allow discussion and be supportive of everyone's opinion. Remember that information widely accepted as "factual" may be incorrect.
- Give girls praise, recognition, and increased responsibility. Let them know you value and care about them.
- Help girls develop healthy ways to manage stress. Unhealthy responses to stress can lead to numerous physical and psychological problems.
- Encourage girls to listen to each other and accept one another.
- Help girls to become assertive and let them know that it's okay to disapprove of their peers' behavior.
- Help girls deal with personal health and psychological problems by knowing how, when, and where to refer them for professional help.

Suggested Troop/Group Growing Up Female Activities

As a Girl Scout leader, you will want to focus on activities related to helping girls grow and develop as part of your ongoing troop group program. A girl at any age level needs to see herself as an individual of worth, feel positive about herself, and enjoy being female. High self-esteem is essential to a girl's personal growth.

The following recommended activities are designed so that Girl Scout leaders in partnership with girls can gain an understanding of some of the factors that influence girls as they grow up and the role that the girls can play in helping themselves and others to reach their full potential.

The Girls Are Great patch is available to girls from the Brownie Girl Scout through Senior Girl Scout age levels who participate in "growing up female" activities. Information on ordering the patches is available from your council.

The activities attempt to build self-esteem, provide positive ways for coping with the stresses of growing up female, provide avenues for overcoming sex-role stereotypes, and help girls to enjoy being female.

Daisy Girl Scout Activities

Daisy Girl Scouts can learn to be proud of being a girl and develop positive attitudes about growing up. Daisy Girl Scouts can participate in the following activities:

1. Have girls describe themselves with pictures. Have them cut out words or pictures that remind them of themselves—things they like to do or like to eat, places they've been, people or animals that are special to them. Girls can glue pictures on construction paper to form a collage and display them. Girls can also explain what the pictures represent.

2. Have girls discuss some of the differences they've noticed between girls and boys. Include the differences in toys played with, clothes worn, sports or hobbies enjoyed, and the way feelings are expressed. Explain that society often has different ways of looking at and treating boys and girls, but this should not keep girls from trying to fulfill their dreams in life.

3. Invite a health care professional—physician, nurse, dentist, or health educator—to talk to your group about the health habits girls need to practice in order to take good care of themselves. Have the speaker discuss such topics as nutrition, dental care, exercise, rest, and grooming.

4. Have girls plan the troop's snack time for a meeting. They can suggest the snacks, get the food, bring it, and prepare it. Be sure to explain which snack ideas are nutritious and which may not be.

5. Read the story of Juliette "Daisy" Low with the girls (see the *Daisy Girl Scout Leaders' Guide*, pages 120–123). Ask them to discuss how Daisy's dream made a difference in the lives of many girls. Girls might also talk about their own dreams and how they can help make them come true.

6. Help girls learn to relax as a way to relieve tension. Girls should close their eyes, lie very still, and listen quietly to your directions. You might have them tighten and then relax specific parts of the body, take a fantasy trip, or recall a pleasant event in their lives. Be sure to keep your voice soft because this sets the mood for the relaxation exercise.

7. Have girls exercise to some fun, upbeat music. Ask girls to make up their own dance steps. Encourage girls to participate in some physical activity each day.

8. Explain to girls that a role model is someone they might want to be like when they grow up. Ask them to think of women who can be their role models. The girls can share stories about the role models they've each chosen.

9. Ask girls to think of an animal that they're most like and pretend to be that animal. Others can guess the animal. Have girls describe the ways in which they're like the animal.

Brownie Girl Scout Activities

Brownie Girl Scouts can learn that being a girl is wonderful! They can also learn that taking proper care of themselves will help them feel good about themselves. Brownie Girl Scouts can participate in the following activities:

1. Complete the following statement: "I like myself because . . ." Think of things that you like about yourself—things you do well, things you are proud of, things that make you special.

2. Discuss the kinds of things about people's bodies that are sometimes made fun of. Talk about the reasons why this is unfair and hurtful.

3. Make a collage that shows the different jobs women hold. Look through magazines or newspapers to find pictures. Do you think there are some jobs "just for women" and some "just for men"? Is that fair?

4. People have different ways of expressing themselves when something happens that upsets them. Talk about how you would feel if:

- your best friend told you she was moving away
- someone took a ball you were playing with and refused to give it back
- someone was very angry with you
- you had a nightmare
- your favorite pet died

Share what you could do or say if you felt this way. For example, you might talk to a friend or adult you trust about your feelings, go for a walk, cry, play a sport, or work on a hobby.

5. Plan a play day with some friends. Include both girls and boys. Decide on the activities—for example, games, sports, singing. Ask an adult to help you prepare some nutritious snacks to serve your guests.

6. With your troop or group, make a list of some of the things girls seem to be expected to do (for example, play with dolls or wash dishes) and things boys seem to be expected to do (for example, play baseball or climb a tree). Talk about the reasons why some of these things may be unfair and what can be done to change them.

7. Find a physical activity you like such as riding a bike, jogging, jumping rope, or swimming. Participate in this activity at least twice a week with a friend or family member.

8. Help a group of Daisy Girl Scouts learn about good health habits. Decide with your troop or group what activity you would like to teach. Brainstorm a list of ideas and then talk about them. Come to an agreement about what you will do and put your plan into action.

9. Make a "Future" scrapbook. Find pictures that show activities you might enjoy doing when you grow up and places where you might want to live or visit.

10. Think of something you're good at and demonstrate it to your troop or group. For example, if you know a dance, show others how to do it. Or if you know how to make a snack, describe the preparation steps.

Junior Girl Scout Activities

Junior Girl Scouts can learn more about the special joys and frustrations of growing up female in today's world. They can learn about the physical changes of puberty and how to look and feel their best.

Junior Girl Scouts can participate in the following activities:

1. Complete the following statement: "I enjoy being a girl because . . ." Ask some friends to do the same and then discuss why each of you wrote what you did. Were there any statements that caused disagreement among the group?

2. Invite a health care professional to give a presentation on the physical changes during puberty. Plan enough time to have a question-and-answer session. Be sure to keep parents informed and get parental permissions when appropriate.

3. Have a group of friends sit in a circle with one person in the center. Each person takes a turn and gives an honest compliment to the person in the center, who listens without saying anything. After everyone has given a compliment to the person in the center, she returns to the circle and the person on her left goes into the center. The activity continues until everyone has had a chance to be in the center.

4. Think of several different activities you can do that you find relaxing. Some should be active (like aerobic dancing), others quiet (like reading). The next time you are tense or upset, remember to try these to reduce your feelings of stress.

5. Have a meeting using "Looking Your Best" as the theme. Share personal care, health, and beauty tips.

6. Monitor television programs for one week to keep track of how women and men are portrayed. Keep track of time and type of show. Compare lists with friends. How do TV roles compare with real-life situations?

7. Do a survey of your friends to find out about their hopes and dreams for the future. What kinds of careers are they interested in? Ask what kinds of things or people influenced their choices.

8. Design an "Important Women" scrapbook. Be sure to include women from many occupations and times. Try to find out about women who were able to do important things but were not necessarily famous.

9. For many people, it's easier to stick to an exercise program if it's done with others. With a friend, plan an exercise program that can be carried out at least three days a week. Allow about one half hour to one hour for the warm-up, exercising, and cool-down.

10. The words chosen by an author influence the reader's understanding of the subject. Look through three school textbooks or other books in any area and note whether language is used in a way that is unfair to females. For example: Is "men" used to mean people? Is the boss always referred to as "he"? Are police officers described as "policemen"?

11. Make a list of the top ten characteristics that the "perfect" 11-year-old girl can have. Compare your list with others. Discuss why certain characteristics are on the list and how important they really are.

Cadette Girl Scout Activities

Cadette Girl Scouts can learn information and techniques that will help them to stay healthy and reduce stress. They can find out about how laws and the media affect girls' and women's perceptions of themselves.

Cadette Girl Scouts can participate in the following:

1. Make a "Me" montage. On a large sheet of paper, place pictures and words that would help someone understand you. Include your talents, hobbies, and interests. Throughout your montage, add clues to the inner you, the you that may not be widely known.

2. Find out about weight-control programs that work and don't work. Develop a plan to lose weight yourself, or support a friend or relative who is overweight and has expressed a desire to change.

3. Write a short story, poem, or essay that reflects your feelings about growing up female.

4. Through the years, many myths about menstruation have developed. Make a list of them and then provide the correct information.

5. Find out about laws that pertain to women. Chart the history of some laws that have discriminated against women. What laws in your state are designed to prevent discrimination against women?

6. Have a "Good Grooming" party. Share tips and information on makeup, hair and skin care, and sun protection.

7. Design an aerobic exercise program. Be sure to include stretching before and after to prevent injuries.

8. Track the way girls and women are represented in a variety of media. Discuss how public images match or don't match reality. If possible, list the changes that have taken place in the past 25 years. Old television shows, books, movies, magazines, etc., can help you compare.

9. Find out about different kinds of relaxation/stress-reduction techniques (for example, controlled breathing and relaxation exercises, meditation, imaging). Practice one for at least three weeks.

10. Prevention is the best cure. Find out about preventive measures to take for the following women's health concerns: osteoporosis, cancer (breast, cervical, etc.), toxic shock syndrome. Learn how to do a breast self-examination.

11. Find out about bulimia and anorexia, two eating disorders that are harmful, sometimes even life-threatening.

12. Interview mothers who work outside the home in paid employment and those who do not. Find out how they manage the different facets of their lives.

Senior Girl Scout Activities

Senior Girl Scouts can find out about the various roles women have played in the past and the ones they play in contemporary society. Senior Girl Scouts can also learn ways to help younger girls feel good about the changes that are occurring in them as they grow up.

Senior Girl Scouts can participate in the following:

1. Find out about the role of Girl Scouting in girls' lives in past years. Talk to at least three women of different ages who were part of the movement when they were younger. Ask them about their handbook, the activities they did, and the effect Girl Scouting had on their lives.

2. Fashionable styles and looks weren't always easy to achieve or healthy. Develop a presentation on the history of women's styles and fashions that had harmful effects or were uncomfortable for women. Your examples could range from the mild, such as very high-heeled shoes, to the drastic, such as the binding of feet that left aristocratic Chinese women crippled.

3. With a group, role-play the following situations with different endings. Then discuss.

- Two women dressed in business attire arrive at a restaurant. Two men in business suits arrive after them. The maître d' asks the men to follow him to a table before seating the women.
- A woman at a business meeting (where the participants are mainly men) is ignored when she raises her hand to make a comment.
- Think of your own situations to role-play.

4. Find out about the community, state, and federal regulations and laws that protect workers from being sexually harassed on the job.

5. With a trained adult, develop a simple presentation for younger girls to help them learn about physical changes during puberty.

6. Organize a small group to meet once a week for a month or more to discuss issues and concerns related to growing up female. You can focus on appearance, school, boys, careers, families, or any other topic that is important to you as females.

7. Find out from a health professional how to support a friend who has an eating disorder.

8. Write your autobiography, highlighting important events that have shaped your life and your special accomplishments.

9. Find out about premenstrual syndrome, including possible preventive measures and treatments.

10. Design a simple exercise program that can be carried out with Daisy and Brownie Girl Scouts. Under adult supervision, try it out for a few weeks.

11. Compare five different women's magazines. What kinds of issues are discussed? What themes or ideas are presented? What type of women would be likely to read each one?

12. Start a hobby that you can do throughout your life whenever you have some leisure time and want to relax.

Program Links

The following program links provide additional activities and ideas for girls on issues related to growing up female.

For Daisy Girl Scouts

Daisy Girl Scouts Leaders' Guide
Pages 58–65, 92–96, 101.

For Brownie Girl Scouts

Brownie Girl Scout Handbook

Pages 43–63, Brownie Girl Scout Try-Its: Food Fun, pages 146–148; Dancercize, pages 148–150; Sports and Games, pages 150–153; Music, "Move to the Music," page 173.

For Junior Girl Scouts

Girl Scout Badges and Signs

The World of Well-Being: Group Sports, pages 21–22; Healthy Eating, pages 23–24; Hobbies and Pets, pages 25–29; Individual Sports, pages 34–35; Personal Health, pages 36–37. The World of the Arts: Dance #1, 2, page 131.

Junior Girl Scout Handbook

Pages 21–42, 85–93, 121–127, 132–138. Looking Your Best badge, page 174; Healthy Living badge, page 178.

For Cadette and Senior Girl Scouts

Cadette and Senior Girl Scout Handbook

"Personal Development," pages 19–26; "Relationships," pages 27–41 (see especially sections on family, friendship, peer pressure, dating, marriage and parenthood); "Life Skills," pages 61–80; "From Dreams to Reality: Career Exploration," pages 81–104; "Citizen of the World," pages 105–124 (see especially sections on prejudice, people with disabilities, discrimination, health concerns).

Cadette and Senior Girl Scout Interest Projects

Child Care, pages 14–15; Family Living, pages 22–23; Fashion/Fitness/Makeup, pages 24–26; Managing Stress, pages 27–28; Tune In to Well-Being, pages 37–38; Do You Get the Message?, pages 46–47; Heritage Hunt, pages 52–53; The Law, pages 54–55; Leadership, pages 56–58; Understanding Yourself and Others, pages 61–62; Career Exploration, pages 75–76; Creative Writing, pages 98–99.

Resources

Consultants: clergy, health education teachers, nurses, parents, physical education teachers, physicians, psychologists,

Local groups: mental health centers, religious groups, schools, self-help groups, women's groups, youth agencies.

National Organizations

American Medical Association
535 N. Dearborn Street
Chicago, Ill. 60610

American Psychological Association
1200 17th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036

Melpomene Institute for Women's Health Research
2125 East Hennepin Avenue
Minneapolis, Minn. 55413

National Association for Girls and Women in Sports
1900 Association Drive
Reston, Va. 22091

National Clearinghouse for Mental Health Information
National Institute of Mental Health
Room 11A21
5600 Fishers Lane
Rockville, Md. 20857

National Health Information Clearinghouse
P.O. Box 1133
Washington, D.C. 20013-1133

National Women's Health Network
224 Seventh Street, S.E.
Washington, D.C. 20003

President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports
Suite 7103
450 5th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20001

Printed Materials

For Girls

Always Professional Services, P.O. Box 171, Cincinnati, Ohio 45201. *Changing: A Booklet for Girls*, 1983.

Bingham, Mindy, Judy Edmondson, and Sandy Stryker. *Choices: A Teen Woman's Journal for Self-awareness and Personal Planning*. Santa Barbara, Calif.: Advocacy Press, 1983.

Burstein, John. *The Healthy Habits Handbook*. New York: Coward-McCann, Inc., 1983.

Carlson, Dale. *Girls Are Equal Too*. New York: Atheneum, 1976.

Franco, Debra, and David Shepard. *Dear Diary*. New York: The Hearst Corporation, 1983.

Gilbert, Sara. *Feeling Good: A Book About You and Your Body*. New York: Four Winds Press, 1978.

Hyman, Jane, and Barbara Millian Posner. *The Fitness Book*. New York: Simon & Schuster, Inc., 1984.

Kranyik, Margery. *Growing Up Is . . .* Whitehall, Va.: Betterway Publications, Inc., 1985.

Mitchell, Joyce Slayton. *I Can Be Anything: A Career Book for Women*. New York: The College Board, 1982.

Nourse, Alan E. *Menstruation: Just Plain Talk*. New York: Franklin Watts, 1980.

Oleksy, Walter. *It's Women's Work Too!* New York: Julian Messner, 1980.

Pogrebin, Letty Cottin, ed. *Stories for Free Children*. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1982.

Rosenberg, Ellen. *Growing Up Feeling Good*. New York: Beaufort Books, Inc., 1983.

Thomas, Marlo, et al. *Free to Be . . . You and Me*. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1974.

For Adults

Brenner, Aris. *Helping Children Cope with Stress.* Lexington, Mass.: D. C. Heath and Co., 1984.

Carothers, James E., and Ruth Gasten. *Helping Children to Like Themselves: Activities for Building Self-Esteem.* Livermore, Calif.: R/J Associates, 1978.

Channing L. Bete Co., 200 State Road South, Deerfield, Mass. 01073. Pamphlets on a variety of health topics are available at low cost. Write for a full list of titles. Here are a few: "Personal Hygiene," "About Self-Esteem," "About Anorexia Nervosa," "About Bulimia," "What Everyone Should Know About Stress," "Physical Fitness and Your Heart."

Clemes, Harris, and Reynold Bean. *Self-Esteem: The Key to Your Child's Well-Being.* New York: G. P. Putnam's and Sons, 1981.

DeSpelder, Lynne, and Albert Lee Strickland. *Family Life Education: Resources for the Elementary Classroom.* Santa Cruz, Calif.: Network Publications, 1982.

Fezler, William, and Eleanor S. Field. *The Good Girl Syndrome: How Women Are Programmed to Fail in a Man's World and How to Stop It.* New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1985.

Frey, Diane, and C. Jesse Carlock. *Enhancing Self-Esteem.* Muncie, Ind.: Accelerated Development, Inc., 1984.

Greenberg, Selma. *Right from the Start: A Guide to Nonsexist Child Rearing.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1979.

Gussin, Gilda, and Ann Buxbaum. *Self-Discovery.* Boston, Mass.: Management Sciences for Health, 1984.

Pogrebin, Letty Cottin. *Growing Up Free: Raising Your Child in the 80's.* New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1980.

Public Affairs Pamphlets, 381 Park Avenue South, New York, N.Y. 10016. Pamphlets on a variety of health and social issues are available for $1.00 each. Write for a full list of titles. Here are a few: "Health Care for the Adolescent" (No. 463), "Listen to Your Body: Exercise and Fitness" (No. 599), "Men's Jobs for Women" (No. 606), "How to Handle Stress" (No. 622), "Anorexia and Bulimia: Two Severe Eating Disorders" (No. 632).

Rosenberg, Ellen. *Getting Closer.* New York: Berkley Books, 1983.

Additional Resources

Personal Products Co.
Van Liew Avenue
Milltown, N.J. 08850

Tambrands, Inc.
1 Marcus Avenue
Lake Success, N.Y. 11042

GIRL SCOUTS

Girl Scouts of the U.S.A. • 830 Third Avenue • New York, NY 10022

Cat. No. 26-822

22